

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AGRICULTURAL ADJUSTMENT ADMINISTRATIONAGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION PROGRAM
Northeast Region

OCT 8 1936

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Approximately 125,000 farmers have filed work sheets under the Agricultural Conservation Program in the Northeast.

The work sheets cover 34 percent of all crop land and 42 percent of the tilled crop land of the region. The extent of farmer cooperation is considered a real accomplishment in view of the newness of the program and the lateness of its announcement last spring.

Preliminary reports indicate great increases over previous years in the use of lime and mineral fertilizers, and in the amount of pasture and hay land improvement work carried out. A definite check on accomplishments under the program is now in process, and will be reported in the next letter in this series.

Committees Prepare to Certify for Payments

Field supervisors are now visiting farmers to assist them in preparing their Reports of Performance and to secure for county committees the information they will need in approving the applications for payment. On the basis of these reports, the applications for payment will be filled out in the county or State offices and returned to farmers for signature. When these have been returned to the county offices and signed by the county committees, they will be forwarded to Washington for payment.

It is necessary that the Report of Performance provide the county committee with reasonable and adequate basis for its certification that the farmer has honestly carried out those practices for which he is requesting compensation.

In the interest of economy and efficiency, measuring, inspecting, or securing evidence should be limited to that required to give the county committee the essential information.

Shaping the 1937 Program

Plans for county meetings in all agricultural counties to discuss and recommend a 1937 program were made at a regional conference held in Washington on September 15.

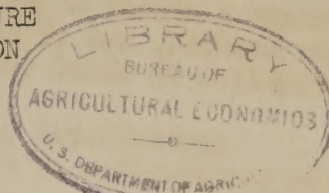
Note:- These news letters will be issued as occasions arise for the information of those engaged in carrying on the Agricultural Conservation Program in the Northeast Region.)

The plan is to build next year's program from the ground up through county meetings of farmers, followed by recommendations to State committees and the preparation by those committees and their technical advisors from the colleges of proposals for State programs.

The State proposals are due in Washington November 16. The county meetings will be held during October and early November.

A suggested schedule for the program-forming procedure is:

Sept. 16 - 30	Preliminary State or District conferences to prepare for county conferences.
Oct. 1 - Nov. 8	County conferences to make recommendations to County Agricultural Conservation Committees.
Oct. 20 - Nov. 8	County Agricultural Conservation Committees prepare recommendations and submit them to State Agricultural Conservation Committees.
Nov. 8 - 16	State Agricultural Conservation Committees prepare and submit proposals for State programs.
Week Nov. 30	Regional Conference on 1937 Agricultural Conservation Program.

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COUNTY CONFERENCES OF FARMERS NECESSARY TO A DEMOCRATIC AND PRACTICAL PROGRAMWhat is Conservation?

The basic idea in conservation is one of providing for the future--not just living in and for today and letting tomorrow worry about itself.

In agriculture the problem of conservation is one of laying the foundations for permanency of farming. For the general welfare that permanency must involve farm efficiency in order that standards of living may be high and costs of living low. For farmers' welfare it must involve reasonable farm incomes in order that the farmer may share fairly in the wellbeing that his own efforts support.

As a matter of fact, permanently efficient farming is impossible without reasonably good farm income. Otherwise, a farmer is, in justice to his family and himself, forced to get a living by drawing on his most important capital - his farm plant.

The problem State and county committees face as they prepare their proposals for the 1937 Conservation program is that of how to use the facilities provided through Federal cooperation to maintain or improve soil productivity, to turn our lands to the uses to which they are best adapted, to prevent erosion and flood damage; and to stabilize the incomes of farmers at just levels.

County Meetings Have Important Work

The county meetings now being arranged in all states to discuss the 1937 Conservation program have two main purposes: to make sure that the program is based on the knowledge, thinking and desires of farmers, and to bring about a flexible program adapted to local needs and conditions.

Big national problems in agriculture frequently are made up of a multitude of little local problems. Effective practical attack on broad problems consists of meeting each of these local problems with programs diversified to fit individual local needs, but coordinated into an effective national whole.

Soil conservation is a national problem which presents a great variety of local forms: in some places, keeping the soil from blowing or washing away; in others, guarding against excessive leaching of essential elements; in still others, changing crop or pasture systems and practices to prevent the slow soil depleting that eventually undermines successful farming. In some areas, practical action consists of getting more crop land into pasture or range or forage. In much of the great range country it involves reducing the number of cattle grazed, in order to prevent the further deterioration and ultimate destruction of the range itself.

In the Northeast, soil conservation on farms is to a considerable extent a matter of cropping systems -- the choice of crops and the way they are handled, and of pasture and of woodland management. Good soil conservation is based on good farm management.

Agricultural conservation is wider than soil conservation; it involves the preservation of the farmer's income as well as his soil.

Conservation problems have different aspects and require different treatments on the hills than in the valleys; on muck land than on sand; in a vegetable or fruit area than in a dairy section; under one sort of price relationship than under another. A practical program must meet each situation.

The program must appeal to progressive farmers or it will fail. It is effective only to the extent that it enlists the voluntary action of many farmers. The cooperation of farmers is necessary if the program is to be made up of practices that farmers will want to carry out.

The county meetings are scheduled in order to secure full farmer participation in shaping the 1937 program to meet the local aspects of great agricultural issues squarely and effectively.

Real Progress in Conservation Revealed by Check-up on 1936 Accomplishments

That soil-building practices have been carried out on approximately 1,250,000 acres of crop and pasture land in the Northeast Region under the 1936 Conservation Program is indicated by the check-up covering sample areas in each state, which has just been completed.

Of the approximately 125,000 farms for which work sheets were filed, 112,500 or 90 percent, have taken active part in the cooperative conservation work and are entitled to payments covering a part of their costs.

The soil-building practices carried out have consisted largely of applying lime or replacing depleted essential mineral elements in crop and pasture soils and the seeding of soil-building crops. Reports indicate that large amounts of lime and probably some phosphorus will be applied later this autumn.

The soil-conserving crops to which shifts have been made under the encouragement of the program are largely clover, alfalfa, and the grasses with smaller areas devoted to green-manure crops and cover crops. The acreage of soil-depleting crops which was transferred to soil-conserving uses amounts to 11.6 percent of the total use for depleting crops.

Of payments to farmers in the Region as a whole it is indicated that 51 percent will be for replacing depleting with conserving crops and 49 percent for carrying out soil-building practices. The percent of total payments in each state that will be compensation for soil-building practices is estimated to be: Main 62%; New Hampshire 72%; Vermont 71%; Massachusetts 49%; Rhode Island 58%; Connecticut 33%; New York 55%; New Jersey 55%; and Pennsylvania 31%.